



Complete Agenda

Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date and Time

2.00 pm, THURSDAY, 25TH OCTOBER, 2018

Location

Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH

Contact Point

Sion Owen
01286 679665

(DISTRIBUTED 18/10/18)

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (15)

Plaid Cymru (8)

Councillors

Annwen Daniels
Charles Wyn Jones
Olaf Cai Larsen
Judith Mary Humphreys

Annwen Hughes
Linda Ann Jones
Catrin Elen Wager
Edgar Wyn Owen

Independent (5)

Councillors

Dylan Bullard
Anne Lloyd Jones
Hefin Underwood

John Brynmor Hughes
Dewi Wyn Roberts

Llais Gwynedd (1)

Councillor Anwen J. Davies

Gwynedd United Independents (1)

Councillor Dewi Owen

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

4. MINUTES

4 - 6

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the last meeting of this committee held on 26/6/18, be signed as a true record.

5. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES 7 - 9 CONSULTATION FOR 2019-20

To receive the observations of this committee in response to the consultation

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 26/6/18

Present: Councillor Dewi Owen (Chairman).

Councillors: Dylan Bullard, Annwen Daniels, Anwen Davies, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Anne Lloyd Jones, Charles Wyn Jones, Cai Larsen, Dewi Wyn Roberts and Catrin Wager.

Officers: Bryn Goodman Jones (Information Technology Support Service Team Leader), Vera Jones (Democratic Services Manager), Helen Parry (Information Manager), Cara Williams (Member Development Officer), Delyth Gadlys Williams (Corporate Policy Officer), Huw Ynyr (Senior Information Technology Manager) and Siôn Owen (Member Support Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Linda Ann Jones

1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Resolved: To elect Councillor Dylan Bullard as Vice-chairman of this Committee

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 12 April, 2018 as a true record.

4. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

The Senior Information Technology Service Manager gave a presentation updating the Committee since members of this Committee had migrated to Office 365 on their Surface devices. He stated that the Information Technology Service had responded to problems as they had arisen, and had used the information to improve the provision. He also noted that it had become apparent that more training and support was needed for Members. He added that collaboration between Members and the services that supported them was vital so that a provision could be created that addressed their needs.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Time was needed to become familiar with the new provision and this was more difficult for members who were less confident using Information Technology.
- It was reiterated that Members needed to be provided with more IT training.
- Being able to view e-mails on mobile phones and other devices was very useful.

In response, the Democratic Services Manager stated that she would call Members for further training.

Resolved:

1 - Share the Office 365 with the rest of the Council Members

2 - Further training sessions would be arranged to facilitate use of the new provision among Members.

5. WOMEN IN DEMOCRACY

The report of the Democratic Services Manager was presented by Councillor Catrin Wager who reported on the lessons learnt from attending a conference to promote the role of women in democracy. She stated that the conference introduced the outcomes of research carried out by the Fawcett Society. The main message was the need to promote policies to help women in democracy, calling for cultural and constitutional changes. There was also a need to talk to women to find out about the problems they faced, and encourage women who were active in community groups to consider standing for election.

The Democratic Services Manager also added that the Committee had been working to encourage diversity in democracy before the 2017 Election, and she welcomed the additional information shared by the Councillor.

The Corporate Policy Officer stated that discussions had been held on providing training on unconscious bias following Councillor Catrin Wager's experience at the conference. Discussions were held with the Learning and Development Service and the Democratic Service about piloting a training session.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- Whilst the Community Council was one obvious route for individuals who wished to become councillors, it did not tend to be the best route for women. Since meetings tended to be convened at times that did not fit in around family life, it was more probable that likely candidates would be found in other community groups.
- Contact should be made with community groups in order to encourage active members to take part in the democratic process.
- Much progress had been made in the field of diversity, despite political culture making it difficult for women to participate.
- The work of the Diversity in Democracy sub-group had helped

In response, the Democratic Services Manager noted that a number of factors influenced individuals' decision to stand for election. She added that the Assembly was also conducting research into the field.

RESOLVED:

- 1 - To reconvene the Diversity in Democracy sub group in order to determine the way forward.**
- 2 - To hold a pilot training session on unconscious bias for Committee Members.**

6. PERSONAL SAFETY OF MEMBERS

The Democratic Services Manager presented her report and stated that the public nature of the role of Elected Members meant that they were open to contact with the community at any given time. Whilst that contact could be positive, it could also be negative. She also noted that there had been no specific cases relating to Members' safety but that awareness needed to be raised among Members.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Negative attention was an unavoidable part of the work of Elected Members, and the possible impact of this on individuals needed to be acknowledged.
- It was important for Members to be aware of what was acceptable and unacceptable with regard to negative attention.
- It was important for people to feel as though their voice was being heard and expressed, and that this was an important part of gaining respect in the community.

- The ongoing balancing act between being a public figure and a private citizen, that brought with it a duty to deal with difficult people, and also a duty to take advice and take sensible steps to remain safe where appropriate.
- It was important for relevant information to be available for applicants as well as Elected Members.

In response, the Democratic Services Manager stated that she acknowledged that Members would, from time to time, find themselves in difficult situations, and that there was often a fine line between what was acceptable and unacceptable.

RESOLVED:

1 - That the personal safety of members be proposed as an item for the Area Forums for the purpose of raising awareness.

2 - That the guidelines on personal safety be uploaded onto the Members Portal.

7. DATA PROTECTION

The report of the Statutory Data Protection Officer was presented in which it noted that the General Data Protection Legislation would come into force on 25 May 2018. It was part of the Members' role to protect the data in their possession in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the Council had registered them with the Information Commissioner as data controllers. She added that training had been arranged to assist Members in fulfilling their responsibility to protect and handle data in accordance with the rules. She encouraged Elected Members to attend the training that directly related to their responsibility as Elected Members rather than training that dealt with the field in general.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 12.15pm.

CHAIRMAN

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	25 October 2018
REPORT TITLE	Independent Remuneration Panel – consultation
PURPOSE	To receive the observations of the Democratic Services Committee in response to the consultation
RECOMMENDATION	The Head of Democratic Services to respond to the consultation based on the comments of the committee.
AUTHOR	Geraint Owen Head of Democratic Services Vera Jones Democratic Services Manager

1. The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales is responsible for determining the salaries and costs payable to councillors for carrying out their duties. The Panel publishes draft proposals, which are consulted upon, every year.
2. A copy of the full consultation can be seen by clicking on the following link:

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report - February 2019](#)

3. The consultation is open until 27th November, 2018 and the Head of Democratic Services will respond to the consultation based on the committee's comments.
4. Attention is drawn to the main suggestions which deserve attention:

a) Basic salary:

The Panel is recommending an increase in the basic salary of £268 a year (£13,868 compared to the current £13,600). This would be an increase of 1.97%.

In order to give some context, it should be noted that the Panel's decision in its report in 2009, when setting the members' salary base, links payments with median gross earnings of full-time workers living in Wales. The basic salary was determined on a level which was three fifths of the all-Wales Medial Salary, recognising that there is an unpaid contribution to public service. As a result of financial restrictions on the public sector and local authorities specifically, it has not been possible to maintain the link with median earnings in Wales. The Panel considers that this has undervalued the worth of elected members. To avoid further erosion in relation to average earnings the Panel has decided to increase the basic annual salary to £13,868 (an increase of 1.97%).

The Panel also noted, following discussions with various authorities, that many members expressed that the basic salary is too low to attract younger people and to encourage diversity, and that there is a significant difference between remuneration and support available to elected members in other levels of government in Wales.

b) Salaries for Leaders and Members of the Executive:

The Panel is recommending increasing salaries for Leaders and Members of the Executive by £800 (to include the basic increase of £168).

The salaries of leaders and members of the executive have not been increased for several years (except for the increase in the basic element). The Panel consider that holders of these posts have significant functional responsibility and compared to remuneration of many other public sector roles are not well paid. The Panel have therefore proposed a modest increase of £800 (inclusive of the £268 increase in the basic salary).

c) Payments to Civic Heads and Deputies (Civic Salaries)

The Panel is recommending one level of civic salaries, if they are paid, with the salary of £22,568 for Civic Heads and £17,568 for deputies.

Councils have strongly expressed to the Panel that elected members do not wish to make any choices that require Councils themselves to choose and match the level of activity or duties of a specific member to a given range of salary levels for a role. All such choices are now removed, with civic salaries set as noted above.

Ch) Community and Town Councils

The recommendations concerning Community and Town Councils do not directly affect this Council. However, as we are able to comment on the full consultation, and, as a number of Gwynedd Council elected members are also Community and Town Council members, the main recommendations have been outlined below.

The Panel has a number of recommendations for Community and Town Councils, as noted below:

- *All community and town councils must make available a payment to each of their members of £150 per year as a contribution to costs and expenses.*
- *Community and town councils in Group A must make available an annual payment of £500 each to a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5 members in recognition of specific responsibilities. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses.*
- *Community and town councils in Groups B or C can make an annual payment of £500 each to up to 5 members in recognition of specific responsibilities. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses.*

Since producing its last report, the Panel has met with a number of Councillors and Clerks representing 175 community and town councils in Wales. The Panel confirms the roles individual councils undertake vary significantly and that in accordance with this wide variation, the responsibilities and accountabilities of councillors must also vary. Councillors managing income or expenditure of £1m and those delivering significant services, including some that might have been delegated from principal councils, are operating in a much more complex environment than a council with an annual budget of less than £30,000.

In its last Annual Report the Panel formed 3 groups of community and town councils to reflect these differences based on the level of income *or* expenditure, whichever is the highest, in the previous financial year. These remain unchanged as set out in Table 8.

Table 8: Community and Town Council Groupings

Community and Town Council Group	<i>Income or expenditure in 2018-19</i>
A	£200,000 and above
B	£30,000 - £199,999
C	Below £30,000

Note, Members in receipt of a Band 1 or Band 2 senior salary from a principal council cannot receive any payment from any community or town council, other than travel and subsistence expenses and reimbursement of costs of care. However, this does not preclude them from holding a senior role. For the avoidance of doubt this determination now includes councils in Group C as well as Groups A and B. Where a person is a member of more than one town or community council, they are eligible to receive the £150 and, if appropriate, £500 from each council of which they are a member.

5. The Panel notes that there is a cost to democracy, and in order to ensure local democracy these costs must be met. On the other hand, local authorities must meet the additional costs for elected members in local authority. The requirements for community and town councils to ensure adequate budgets to meet the costs must also be considered, and could lead to an increase in their precepts which would effect the people of Gwynedd.
6. Comments are invited from the Committee as a basis of the Head of Democratic Services response to the consultation by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.